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HOUSECLEANING - THE EASIER WAY

A radio interview between Miss Ruth Van Deman, Bureau of Home Economics, and Mr. Wallace Kadderly, Office of Information, broadcast Wednesday, March 13, 1940, in the Department of Agriculture period of the National Farm and Home Hour, by the National Broadcasting Company and a network of 92 associated radio stations.

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WALLACE KADDERLY:

Yes, here we are in Washington, ---where it's a bit chilly --- sky overcast--- Spring still hiding around the corner. Even so, Ruth Van Deman again today, with more news from the Bureau of Home Economics.

RUTH VAN DEMAN:

Yes, Wallace news of another brand-new bulletin...one that we've been working on, and watching and waiting for, quite some time. Allow me to present you with one of the first copies to come from the press.

KADDERLY:

U m n, another one with a smart black and white cover. And there's no mistaking the title .... "House Cleaning Management and Methods." Ruth, sure you didn't time this new bulletin to jibe with spring house cleaning?

VAN DEMAN:

Spring house cleaning! That sounds like the Gay Nineties .... all the parlor furniture moved out on the front porch .... some beating clouds of dust out the carpet spread on the grass ....

KADDERLY:

Well do I remember! And the family eating a cold snack off the kitchen table.

VAN DEMAN:

And everybody feeling tired and cross .... Thank goodness, those upheavals of spring and fall cleaning went out when modern equipment came in ....

KADDERLY:

I suppose that is what made the difference. I hadn't stopped to figure it out. I just took it for granted that nowadays houses stay clean.

VAN DEMAN:

That's a tribute to the good planning and management of the Lady of the House. And right there you've put your finger on the No. 1 point in house cleaning the easier way. That is to make a schedule for the cleaning jobs to be done daily, weekly, monthly. Of course, there are a few like cleaning draperies, washing rugs, waxing furniture, that have to be done only once or twice a year.

KADDERLY:

But the main idea I gather is to keep clean rather than to make clean.

VAN DEMAN:

That's it .... and to keep dirt out of the house, as much as possible.

KADDERLY:

The men of the family can help some on that .... leave dirty work clothes in the basement and not track pieces of the garden across the living room floor ....

(Over)

VAN DEMAN:

Wallace, I can see you know what's in this house-cleaning bulletin without even opening the cover.

KADDERLY:

No, no, nothing like that. I was just speaking from the school/<sup>of</sup>experience ..

VAN DEMAN:

Well after all, the rules for good cleaning are based on experience, plus knowing what materials to use to take the dirt off a paint, and varnish, and fabrics and bath tubs, and sinks, and so on ....

KADDERLY:

And also knowing how to get the best work out of those modern tools you mentioned a moment ago.

VAN DEMAN:

You believe what the old Chinese philosopher says: That "a man bent on good work must first sharpen his tools."

KADDERLY:

I do - very emphatically.

VAN DEMAN:

It's certainly true that a woman bent on good house cleaning must first understand how to use her brooms and brushes ....

KADDERLY:

Vacuum cleaners, floor waxers ....

VAN DEMAN:

Yes, if you'll just take a look inside that bulletin you'll find several pages devoted to the selection and care of cleaning equipment.

KADDERLY:

I do find them right here ..... starting on page 5 and running to page 11. And I see here a picture of a long-handled dust pan and brush.

VAN DEMAN:

Yes, one long handle may prevent a hundred backaches.

KADDERLY:

Is that another Chinese proverb?

VAN DEMAN:

No, that's just plain American housewife's philosophy. And you'll see the same philosophy appearing again and again through these directions for house cleaning. The emphasis is on tools to save hands and backs, lighten and lessen work. Even so there's a lot of rubbing and scrubbing that can't be dodged.

KADDERLY:

I see there's a section here on cleaning supplies .... what to rub and scrub with, I suppose that means.

- 3 -

VAN DEMAN:

Yes, that's where lots of conscientious cleaners go wrong. They take a strong alkali or a scratchy harsh abrasive and go after the enameled iron sink or the wash bowl in the bathroom and then wonder why the smooth shiny glaze disappears. Or they wear the paint off the woodwork, washing it with strong soapsuds.

KADDERLY:

After all, a coating of paint is only a few thousandths of an inch thick.

VAN DEMAN:

But a woman with a passion for getting the house spotlessly clean doesn't always stop to think of that.

KADDERLY:

But isn't there always at least one best way to clean every kind of a surface .... clean it and yet preserve it, not damage it?

VAN DEMAN:

Practically always, yes. But you have to know your surfaces. And you have to know your cleaning agents. And you have to know how to apply the cleaner to the surface.

KADDERLY:

You're making house cleaning a kind of applied science.

VAN DEMAN:

Certainly it is .... a combination of household chemistry and physics. Mrs. Moffett, who wrote this new house cleaning bulletin, has put in some of that scientific background. But you'll see over in the part on methods of cleaning she comes right down to how-to-do-it.

KADDERLY:

I'm looking at that part now. I'm interested in what she has to say here about leather surfaces. This about bindings on books .... "Book bindings may be preserved by working oil into them with the hands" ....

VAN DEMAN:

Sorry, Wallace, but we can't let you turn into a bookworm right here before the microphone.

KADDERLY:

Maybe this isn't the time and place. May I take this copy home then and add it to our reference shelf .... our household library?

VAN DEMAN:

You may, most certainly. And if you show the Lady of the House, the picture of that cleaning closet ....

KADDERLY:

We already have one, Ruth.

VAN DEMAN:

Then you know what a grand convenience. All the mops and pails, and brushes and cleaning cloths, in one closet where you can put your hand right on them - - -



KADDERLY:

And shut the door on them. By the way I see the door in this picture has holes in it, to allow for ventilation. That's a very good idea. Oily cloths in a warm place are a fire hazard.

VAN DEMAN:

Well, we've just taken a hop, skip, and jump through this new bulletin. But we'll have more to say about it from time to time.

KADDERLY:

The real news today is that there is such a bulletin in print. And am I right in saying the Bureau of Home Economics is ready to take orders for it?

VAN DEMAN:

Oh yes, orders by post card, letter, any way.

KADDERLY:

That being the case, Farm and Home friends, all you have to do if you want this new bulletin is to just write house cleaning bulletin on a post card, with your name and address, and mail the card to the Bureau of Home Economics here in Washington, D. C. And back will come to you in due course of time this new bulletin on house cleaning 1940 style.

VAN DEMAN:

And, Wallace, may I add just a word of thanks to our Farm and Home friends?

KADDERLY:

Certainly ....

VAN DEMAN:

.... for the very kind letters and cards I've been receiving lately. I certainly do appreciate every one very much, and I only wish I could send a special answer to each one.

KADDERLY:

But there are only 24 hours in a day.

Well, Ruth Van Deman, we'll be looking for you on Tuesday next week - your regular day.

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